

CITY OF REDMOND ARTS COMMISSION

RETREAT MINUTES

June 7, 2004

Redmond Senior Center

“Voice the views of the community to Mayor and City Council in reference to all cultural endeavors.”

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Phil Teller, Vice Chair Kay Tarapolsi, Heidi Houghton, Rebecca LaBrunerie, Latha Sambamurti, Roy Leban, Kate Cochran (left at 8:45 p.m.)

ABSENT AND EXCUSED: Jill Schmidt, youth advocates Joscelyn Doleac and Nicole Rollofson

STAFF PRESENT: Melna Skillingstead, Arts Administrator; Sandra Bettencourt, Recreation Program Manager; Pam Maybee, Recording Secretary

AUDIENCE PRESENT: None

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AGENDA

Note: Bold/italic text denotes Staff and Commissioner follow-up resulting from this meeting.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Phil Teller called to order the *RETREAT* meeting of the Redmond Arts Commission (RAC) at 6:50 p.m. at the Redmond Senior Center.

II. CULTURAL CONGRESS DISCUSSION

Teller, Tarapolsi, and Schmidt attended this year’s Cultural Congress. Tarapolsi reported it was a collaboration of themes, e.g., Seattle Art Museum’s collaboration with Seattle Center and art organizations in the community to use their existing resources together, and LAAs meeting with different cities to collaborate and partner.

Remaining Cultural Congress discussion was deferred.

III. CORE VALUES DISCUSSION

A. INTRODUCTION

LaBrunerie opened with a list generated from last year's retreat that Commissioners intended to discuss in their future meetings. They believed these items—inspired from last year's Cultural Congress—would help them generate a brand:

1. Mission statement
2. Core values
3. Goals
4. Brand assessment
5. Articulate the brand promise
6. Living the brand

LaBrunerie asked Commissioners if, after tonight's discussion, they would want to make a commitment to work on this list one more year. She reviewed "Living the Brand," a presentation created by her that was in part prompted from last year's Cultural Congress, as well as branding work done at her job, to help Commissioners develop their own RAC brand.

She described what is in a brand. Using the arts education curriculum folder as an example, she pointed out that the brochures were all different—offering no continuity of a look and feel. She emphasized a brand must have a consistent look and feel to stimulate subliminal associations. An example would be while watching a movie, the brain continually asks questions, assesses, and makes judgments on a subliminal level as it sees pictures. A brand should stimulate this response as well.

B. DISCUSSION: IMAGINE THE RAC BRAND AS A PERSON

Commissioners performed an exercise to imagine the RAC brand as a "person" and, in addition, what they would like people to see:

1. As a person (or how a person/people perceive RAC now)

- A group of friends (a club) who work together to accomplish agreed upon tasks and goals
- Lack of gallery space, central lack of artists to show
- Individual programs not inter-related
- Supports the arts, but an unknown entity
- Dependent on what type of media the public is exposed to
- Contributes to community, variety and multi-culturally
- Many programs in City but few know about them, or they are under-attended
- A town in the midst of a freeway
- Little of art, little of RAC (merely a background group)

- Provides some entertainment
- RAC is earnest, not assertive, overshadowed, untapped potential
- 10% of Redmond know about the arts

2. Want others to see

- A political body focused on arts in the community
- Outdoor Sculpture Garden, Arts in the Parks, Winter Performance Series
- Friendly, collaborative, non-confrontational, working well with partnerships
- Something more edgier that would prompt questions
- Professional, but not stiff
- Good entertainment
- Multi-cultural
- Representing all communities and cultures
- Money
- High standards and quality
- Who they are and what they do
- Vibrant art in Redmond (not just Kirkland and Bellevue)
- Think of RAC as dynamic, energetic, active, challenging
- Integrated, connected
- Familiarity on part of community that there is the variety
- Art that creates a positive reaction that ripples beyond the immediate people affected
- One or two, or more, core events RAC is known for and about

LaBrunerie stated that if RAC has a strong brand, the money will come in—it is a direct outcome of living the brand. She noted some reactions from the public to RAC events have been negative. If RAC is associated with the event and the event is negatively perceived, it is the entity (RAC) that gets the negative feedback (e.g., performances such as *52 Pick-Up* and *Captain Smarty Pants* were reflected back on RAC).

Commissioners reviewed their mission statement. LaBrunerie clarified that the mission statement is slightly different than a tagline. She emphasized that Commissioners cannot say the mission statement enough times to the community. Repeatedly call attention to “Enhancing OUR community through the arts.”

Commissioners reviewed the four goals and believed them to be good and acceptable as established.

C. DISCUSSION: CORE VALUES

Commissioners did an exercise on Core Values: their motivations, their reason for being on the RAC, what they want to achieve, and what RAC’s key principles/standards are. LaBrunerie asked them to think about edginess, e.g., approaching the Mayor with ideas or need, staff time,

adult entertainment, prejudices—to think about parameters within and without. Imagine no political barrier to enhance the arts. Commissioners' responses:

What is your motivation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RAC mission statement • Stay connected to artists • Staff: challenge policy that is outdated • Make Redmond nice • Elevate arts as priority • Integrate the arts • Recognition by Redmond residents • Staff: facilitate leadership, implement public policies • Staff: provide support and move things forward • Bring high quality concerts to Redmond with visual and performing arts • Expose people to a variety of cultures and types of art • Provide opportunities to expand horizons in performing and visual arts and hands on experiences • Bring art to Redmond
Why are you in RAC?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take personal action in community to promote arts • Grow local arts for all to enjoy • Bring art to Redmond • Serve community and living through art • Meet people, be involved in arts field • Accomplish something • Help Redmond • Give opportunities to grow in arts
What do you want to achieve?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition in the community and surrounding areas for what RAC does • Lasting improvements in culture • Broader awareness and involvement of Redmond residents • More money • A strong plan for the near future • Bring strong talent to Redmond • More awareness of visual and performing arts • Community appreciation for the arts and respect for arts • Arts around the town • Staff: leave a lasting legacy with programs that live well beyond staff's tenure • Sculpture all over the city • Larger task force for Outdoor Sculpture Garden
What are RAC's key principles & standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multicultural • Family-friendly

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote original work • Fiscal responsibility • Respect for artists • Arts education should be within the core of public education • Multicultural • Family entertainment • Different forms of art • Quality • Partnerships/co-sponsorships • Broad range of community focus art programs • Higher quality • Residents see art as public, located in Redmond—not just “over there” in other cities
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Skillingstead noted it would be important to take the steps to expose and educate the public in order for them to appreciate and respect the art. Commissioners discussed educating the public for the sake of respecting art, even though a particular art style/genre may not be liked.

Skillingstead interjected that the Redmond Police Department has asked for art that would represent law enforcement. *Commissioners concurred to pursue the Police Department’s interest and request.*

D. DISCUSSION: BUILDING A BRAND

In an attempt to create their brand, Commissioners performed an exercise where they built a “brand house” from Initiatives, Tone and Manner, Core Values, and Brand Promise, with the Mission Statement at the top. They listed what they believed each of these represented:

- Brand promise: These could be RAC’s goals; or instead, what the public wants from RAC, not necessarily RAC’s goals
 - Family-oriented
 - High quality
 - Multicultural
 - Original (not mass-produced)
 - Challenging
- Core Values
 - A passion for arts
 - Partnering (collaborating with other art groups)
 - Multicultural
 - High quality
 - Family-friendly

- Challenging
- Original
- Tone and Manner
 - Delete inspirational; add professional (high quality)
 - Delete responsible; add responsive
 - Delete creative; add innovative (original/resourceful)

Skillingstead noted other LAA's see Redmond as on the cutting edge, for example, a city that has "done it" or "done it more." RAC is known as more advanced, comprehensive, more staff supported, compared to other cities in the area.

Tarapolsi suggested giving grants to individual artists, to possibly put money aside for them, in order to bring them out into the public eye. Skillingstead clarified that if the City gives out money, there must be a returned benefit for the City from it.

Leban noted that Redmond does not have a "scene," a place to go. Discussion ensued whether or not Redmond should serve family-oriented or adult entertainment. Cochran emphasized Redmond is not going to compete with Seattle; rather, Redmond needs to define its own niche. If RAC decides to change its focus from family-oriented, then a hurdle must be crossed where Redmond is not competing with Seattle. Teller believed that Redmond is currently a family-oriented city, i.e., parents with children. He added that RAC cannot bill itself as "edgy" because everything is "G" rated. Others believed the City has a mixed population that is not being addressed, e.g., single adults, gays, etc. Bettencourt posed the question of whether or not RAC is truly representing the community mix of Redmond. Commissioners pointed out that kid shows brought in the most money; the more adult shows (e.g., *52 Pick Up*) did not bring in the audience/money.

Teller stressed that RAC must know its target audience. LaBrunerie suggested doing an art survey at Derby Days to find that out.

Commissioners understood that singles without kids would more likely go to Seattle to spend their money on quality shows. Seniors typically do not go out at night, but would go to an afternoon show. More adult performances should be offered later at night. Commissioners concluded they need to know their target market, i.e., who they are trying to attract.

E. DISCUSSION: MOVING FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

Commissioners formed four groups to discuss the four scenarios of the handout. Labrunerie asked them to focus on the main point: Show how RAC can execute the brand; show how every single decision can live the brand. Each group reported what would need to happen, what decisions would need to be made for each scenario.

Scenario #1: Annual Report:

- Create a subcommittee to take care of branding to include the Annual Report, Outdoor Sculpture Garden brochure, Arts in the Parks and Winter Performance Series brochures, and ads in the media. The subcommittee would know deadlines for each program.
 - Target information to business groups etc.
 - Use as a marketing tool by providing incentives such as a coupon in the report for a free cup of coffee. Count cups of coffee redeemed to know who has looked at the report.
- Form a subcommittee for this.

Scenario #2: Deliver a speech on RAC:

- Speak on the cultural plan
- Talk with community focus groups
- Share mission and passion for arts
- High quality and professional tones
- Inclusiveness, partnering dollars
- Grow interaction dialogue
- Respect each other's point of view

Scenario #3: Comment to the press:

- Convey a sense of passion
- Be responsive, innovative, and use quality
- Facts are secondary to emotion
- Provide an invitation to the event
- Whoever is passionate about the event should talk to the press
- Have a variety of people expressing the variety
- Call other reporters; if one was interested, there could be others

LaBrunerie noted the person who has the energy, who has put the “sweat” into the program/event should be the speaker. Information provided should be the brand packet, email and web site address, *FOCUS Magazine*. Houghton noted that avenues are available; however, the challenge is getting people to read and act on them.

Scenario #4: Guidance to newspapers for ads on the performance series:

- Font size
- Tag line
- All necessary information
- Collaborate with RAC and marketing people
- Show them something that has already been done
- Give look and feel at the beginning, a similarity recognizable, distinguishable to RAC

F. DISCUSSION: LIVING THE BRAND

- Continue to think how to strengthen the brand
- Keep executing the brand in everything
- Delivering on the brand will define RAC
- Work together as one for lasting success

- Be consistent

LaBrunerie emphasized the need to have the same look and feel in the brand and to make a commitment to have that same look and feel. People need to recognize it as RAC. For example, use the same color.

The team and/or subcommittee creating their marketing scheme must be accountable to RAC's approval. Skillingstead recommended more time be added into the approval process, including feedback from Commissioners.

LaBrunerie noted that logos are edgy. A logo is important as a hook for a brand; however, it is very bad to change it. She encouraged making the brand first, and then creating the logo from the brand. Use it the same way in everything. *Commissioners agreed to take steps toward creating a logo following the creation of their brand.*

Bettencourt asked how RAC would keep on course. LaBrunerie responded that Commissioners need to create a brand promise, and then keep checking it to answer whether or not it fits the "house" (the RAC brand) made up of Initiatives, Tone and Manner, Core Values, and the Brand Promise. Do research, e.g., a survey at Derby Days, to understand RAC's target market, which will become very clear. There will be a trend and there will be a feel to it.

Skillingstead asked LaBrunerie what kind of questions to ask in a survey. *LaBrunerie offered to work with her on the survey questions.* Teller suggested using the "Glittererie" car to attract the public during Derby Days to ask them the survey questions.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by: Commissioner LaBrunerie

Second by: Commissioner Tarapolsi

Motion carried: 6-0 unanimous

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Recording Secretary, Pam Maybee

NEXT REDMOND ARTS COMMISSION MEETING:

June 10, 2004

Old Redmond School House Community Center

7:00 p.m.

